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30.

The Ripping-up of Sir John Presbyter's Garment:

OR, THE

Ground-work of Schism,

Laid open to all true Protestant Readers, &c.

Reader,

I Shall not stop your desires by an Epistle, but fall plainly to the Matter, which I hope may not only divert, but convert thee, if you are not already Conformable; for know, those foul and damnable *Presbyterical practices* which are daily working, are not invisible to the All-seeing God, though for a time they may be so to men.

I know their present designs are strengthened and encouraged by the same Party, who made the late Insurrection in *Scotland*; they think (and stick not to speak it too) that by compulsion the King must yield to their demands: but let them not be deceived, for howsoever in *Scotland* some thought themselves strong enough to resist their Prince, yet I thank God they are not so popular here, but the King's Laws and Authority is able to overtake them: And assured they may be, that these their insolent oppositions against the King and his Interest, will make their Faction be more narrowly look'd into; for certainly they have not any spark of God's Grace, nor Loyalty to their King, and so are become the Children of Sin and Rebellion: wherefore behold their proceedings, and judge them accordingly.

You may perceive how that Sect, since the first beginning of it, (which was but in Queen *Marie's* Reign) hath proceeded from evil to worse by innumerable degrees: at first they did only manifest a dislike of *Episcopal Government*, and some Ceremonies used in the Church of *England*, as liking better the Government of *Geneva*; which was desired by Mr. *Calvin*, and that cunningly enough for the State of that Republick, which being Popular, could not brook any other but that which is Popular also. And yet I must tell you, Mr. *Calvin* wanted nothing of a Bishop, but only the Title; for the Church of *Geneva* is not a *Parochial*, but *Diocesan* Church, consisting of divers Parishes, which make up one great *Presbytery*, and he all the days of his life was Moderator thereof: And so likewise Mr. *Beza*, for ten years after the others death, held the same place of Government; until *Danans* set him beside the Cushion, and procured the Precedency to go by turns. In the next place, from dislike they proceeded to contempt of *Episcopal Government*; and this (if you will believe St. *Cyprian*) hath been the very beginning of all Heresies and Schisms, *Initia Hæreticorum* (saith he) & *ortus Schismaticorum hæc sunt, ut præpositum superbo tumore contemnunt*. And again, *Unde Schismata & Hæreses orta sunt nisi dum Episcopus qui unus est, & Ecclesia præest, superba quorundam presumptione contemnitur: & homo dignatione Dei honoratus ab indignis hominibus judicatur*. In the third place, from contempt they did proceed unto open disobedience unto all the Orders of the Church, and (like those of whom *Naxianzen* speaks) would be pleased with nothing but what did proceed from their own devising, esteeming him the Holiest man, who could find most faults. From disobedience they did proceed unto Schism and open Separation, accounting themselves only to be the Brethren and Congregation of Christ, and all others who are not of their Faction to be the Children of this World. From Schism they proceed to Heresie; for it is most true which St. *Jerome* did observe, that *Omne Schisma gignit sibi Hæresin*, every Schism doth devise unto it self an Heresie, some false Doctrine or other, to maintain their Separation; And these men have devised not a few, and some that have been condemned by Ancient Councils and Fathers; as namely, *Epiphanius* reckons among the condemn'd Heresies of *Aerius*, that he maintained there was no difference between a Bishop and a Presbyter, and that all set Fasts are unlawful, Jewish and Superstitious. And is not such the Doctrine of these men? But their disobedience, Schism and Heresie, has again drawn them even to the brink of Rebellion, where the hopes of some immediate proceedings, &c. has stopt their Carreer for the present: But I am deceiv'd if they have not yet a farther Journey to go, and that they no ease can find till arrived at the second part of the Good Old Cause, from which their hearts now differ but little; and if you'll but read the History of the late Civil Wars, you will find their proceedings were then more moderate than now they are. This is the just Judgment of God, that they who out-run the limits of his infinite goodness, and the mercy of their most clement and gracious King, should also run out of their own wits, and into the very Lake of Perdition and Puritanism.

I beseech all good Protestants in time to consider their ways and proceedings, and how they endeavour to cast milts before our eyes, whilst their Rebellious practices run to the point they so earnestly pray for: I protest their gross Hypocrisie in matters of Religion, and their base injurious dealing with Kings, who are God's Vice-gerents here on Earth, is most unpardonable, both which I have observ'd by their Doctrine and Practices, and will now give you a brief taste of both.

As for their Doctrine, we know they would, if they durst, take from the King all Authority in Causes Ecclesiastical, and will not allow him to do those things which the good Kings of Judah, and the Godly Emperors of the Primitive Church did; nay they will not accept or allow of so much as one Member of Parliament, recommended by the King, nor His Majesty to make any Laws concerning matters of outward Order and Polity; nay they have gone farther, allowing and encouraging Subjects to resist their Prince, and are now on the same step of Rebellion, and that next door to being done by force of Arms; and in some cases to depose him, nay and condemn him as a Tyrant: And though the Godliest Prince in the World, by them he must be esteemed so, for it much pleases the *Presbyter* to declare him such; so that according to this account, Kings must be in a far worse case under *Presbytery*, than ever they were under the *Pope*. This is their Doctrine; and now I will shew you their Practice: First, those of the same Fraternity in *Scotland*, how they dealt with King *James*; they persecuted him in his Mothers womb, and when he came unto ripe years, they would not suffer him to enjoy one quiet day, by their Seditious practices: of a great many, I will cull out some of their Attempts, which are most notorious. First, when the King-leaders of that Faction had concluded the State of Bishops to be unlawful, they sent their Commissioners unto the King, commanding him and his Council under pain of Excommunication to put them down. Secondly, when King *James* was taken Prisoner at *Ruthen*, by their Treachery, intending thereby to enforce His Majesty to their own ends, he being happily delivered from them, did with the consent of his Three Estates in Parliament, declare it to be a Treasonable Fact; but the Seditious Ministers being assembled, and taking themselves to be the Supreme Judicatory, did pronounce that Treason to be most just and lawful: but they being farther examined on that point, declin'd his Majesties Authority, alledging he was no Judge over them in Church-matters: all this and much more you may read in King *James* his Declaration, printed Anno 1585. When the Earl of *Bothwell* was in the act of Rebellion against the King, and had divers times attempted to take away his Majesties Life, there were by the Ministers great Collections made to maintain the said Earl in his Rebellion. Afterwards when the *Gowries* conspired against his Majesty, and he miraculously rescued by the Valour of his Servants, his Majesty desired there might be a Publick Thanksgiving throughout the Realm for his deliverance; but those of that Faction did plainly say, they neither believed the King or his Nobles, nor that ever there was such a Conspiracy; but that it was a Plot of the King to murder the *Gowries*. One thing I cannot omit; how they call'd a National Assembly to be held in *Aberdeen*, the King suspecting the event, and having long before by Act of Parliament, all Authority in Causes Ecclesiastical, sent to inhibit them by Proclamation, but they would not desist: whereupon some were apprehended, indicted and found guilty of High Treason; yet that merciful Prince did neither take Life nor Goods from any of them, only caused six to be banished, who upon the acknowledgment of their offence, were admitted to their former stations again; and yet the Tincture of Rebellion would not out, for the Successors of those very persons are to this day some of the principal Firebrands in a new, but worse Conspiracy; witness the late Insurrection in *Scotland*, the most inhuman, and barbarous murder of the Archbishop of *St. Andrews*, &c.

Thus have I given you a brief account of their Doctrine and Practices concerning the opposing of Kings; but lest this should be thought a National sin, and so *Jerusalem* upbraid her Sister *Samaria*, I will shew unto you, that they of the same Fraternity in *England*, have not at all swerved from the tracks of their *Scotch* Predecessors, but rather are become more dangerous and bloody in their designs; witness King *Charles* the First, of blessed memory, how barbarously they dealt with his Majesty, and the whole Line-Royal, by their means to be banished: And yet when God of his infinite mercy had re-call'd our gracious King *Charles* the Second, and set him on his Throne, in the spite of those his mortal Enemies, he of his great goodness and compassion extended his gracious Pardon to all such as were any ways concerned against him only some few excepted; and yet even from that very day have these wicked Varlets run on in the old path of Rebellion and Conspiracy, and are even at this juncture studying ways to dethrone his most Sacred Majesty: and yet these are the things we silly Protestants take for Saints, and cannot discover them to be of the Black Robe, until we come to dance to the second part of the same Tune they play'd in 41. when then perhaps 'tis too late. For if ever there were Devils transformed into Saints, 'tis now, and thrust in under the Skirt of *John Presbyter's* Cloak, who with the pretence of Sanctity, labour to bring all manner of discord into the Church, and confusion into the Kingdom, and the Government thereof; as if the Regulating of Church and State, wholly rested with the Rabble Faction. By the sum of all Histories it is plain, these People envy all Kings whatsoever, and so get Gods promise made to his Church, That Kings should be ben *Nursing-fathers*, and *Queens ben Nursing-mothers*, &c.

But what need I repeat matters of old? For the Children are worse than the Fathers, and their present devices doth surpass all the Iniquities of their Fathers, and will make those of old to be forgotten: And yet these are the people who swear to be good examples to us of all Godliness, Sobriety, and in fine, of every Duty they owe to God and Man. Now pray Reader guess what Godliness, Sobriety,

or Righteousness, has or can be in such proceedings: they now begin to be weary with assaulting us with their Tongues, which are sharper than Arrows, and with their Pens, which write Treason in as plain a stile, as their Parsons in their Pulpits teach it; and are come (as *Tertullian* says) *a stilo ad macheram*, from words to blows, or very near the matter: which puts us to say, with *Bernard*, *Leones evasimus, sed incidimus in Dracones*, we escap'd the mouths of Lions, but have fallen into a Den of Dragons; for these sure are *Ceraustes* fiery flying Dragons. But it would be well if their madness stay there, for they not only do wrong unto God in the highest degree, but would touch his Anointed, by entering into a mutual *League and Covenant*, by incensing and Arming his Subjects against him, taking Oaths of them to stand by, and maintain the Cause, and endeavouring to sow discord amongst those of Loyal Souls; to the confusion of our gracious King and his Government. Good God! can such call themselves Christians that do these things? can they warrant this out of Gods Word, which commands to *obey our Kings*, and that for *Conscience sake*, even then when all Kings were Enemies to Christianity and Religion? or have they any Examples for such proceedings out of pious Antiquity? The Christians in the Primitive Church, when they were led as Sheep to the slaughter, and suffer'd the most exquisite Torments that could be devis'd, yet would never take Arms to resist their Prince, but put on this resolution *Arma nostra preces & lachryma*: Yea, when those persecuting Emperors had occasion of War against the barbarous Nations, the Christians were the Emperors best and most faithful Souldiers, so terrible unto their Enemies, that they were call'd the *Thundering Legions*: And St. *Austin* doth highly commend them for their faithful Service unto the Heathen Emperors, who did most cruelly spill their Blood, only for their profession of Christ. And let no man say, it was for want of Power, that they did not defend themselves by Arms; for it is well known, that if they had thought it lawful to resist the Emperor, they were of that number, power and resolution, that they might have shaken the foundations of the whole Empire. But now it seems our *Presbyterians*, of whom I speak, have learned another sort of Doctrine, and think they are bound to stand to the defence of their dread Sovereign, his Person and Authority, in defence of the true Religion, (as they express it in the Confession of their Faith, whereunto they all are obliged to swear;) so that they do plainly insinuate, they are no farther bound to defend the Kings Person and Authority, than he doth stand in the defence of the true Religion, and that only must be accounted so, which they themselves best like of: If the King will not maintain that, then they are freed from their Allegiance. Wherein they have more then justified the *Jesuits*, for about the beginning of the late Civil Wars, a *Jesuit* wrote a Book in defence of the Loyalty of their Order, alledging that Protestants had allowed the Rebellion of Subjects against Princes, and gives instance for the same in *Buchanan*, *Knox*, and *Goodman*: and now it fears me, that ere it be long another *Jesuit* may publish a Book, to prove that the late Insurrection in *Scotland*, was a greater Rebellion then was the Popish Plot: For if matters are carefully inspected, we may find our *Puritan Brethren* have engaged a great part of *Scotland* and *Ireland*, and many who know not what the matter means; so that this may be called the common sin of that *Seit*, whereas the other cannot be charged upon the Religion of the *Papists*. But perhaps you will say, it is Religion that moveth them: What! did ever the true Religion allow of Rebellion? *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum*: I know they pretend the defence of the National Confession of their Church, and the Oath received by their Forefathers in the year 1581. by the Kings example and commandment; but if it be so, I will subscribe their *Covenant* also, which is the greatest Curse I can lay upon my mortal Enemy.

And now I have taken from them all pretences of Religion, which is not fit to be a Mask for such Villany; I will guess what are the true causes that set them on work, not using light conjectures, but building on more then probable grounds.

First, That which sets the Clergy on work, is *self-love*, which (as St. *Austine* says,) did build the City of the Devil: it is pride, singularity, ambition, and the desire of popular applause; they cannot endure to acknowledg a Bishop, esteeming themselves men of greater gifts and perfections. This pride has been the occasion of many Heresies in the Church, as will evidently appear unto those who read the Histories of *Arius*, coveting the Bishoprick of *Alexandria*; of *Donatus*, labouring to have been Bishop of *Carthage*; of *Novatus*, desiring a Bishoprick in *Italy*; and divers others I could name, who affected these Honourable places, and receiving their several Foyls, when through ambition they could not obtain what they sought for in the Church; they laboured to gain Honour another way. I could also tell you of many who are now Ring-leaders of the Faction here in *England*, as *Pemberton*, *Stretton*, *Alsop*, *Whitaker*, and divers others, who publicly preach Sedition and Rebellion in their several Meetings, and the King to be a Conspirator against himself: If such can be the true Doctrine of Christ, as they pretend it is, God have mercy on all Protestants.

Secondly, That which sets the Lay-men on work, is *Covetousness*: amongst whom not a few would gladly prey (as their predecessors have done) upon the Abbies, Church-Lands, Bishopricks, Tithes, and Church-Duties, &c. And they in *Scotland* and *Ireland*, as they are of the same Struck, so consequently they are also of the same mind: And when they hear any speak against *Papery*, *Bishops*, or *Cathedral Churches*, nay against the King or his Government, (for there's enow dare do it) how it pleases and tickles their Ears, looking for the like prey they formerly had? These Dark-Lanthorn Saints have already in their hearts devoured the Government both of Church and State, and value not Religion, so they may but get the Spoil; nay I am confident they would have been content to have Crucified our Blessed Saviour, so they might but have had his Garment. Our Age is full of Bloud-thirsty Cormorants,

rants, whose hearts and inclinations are full of *Perjury, Blasphemy, Murder, and Treason* in all degrees, and are still yawning after a prey to fill the bottomless Sacks of their greedy Appetites with: And although it be to their perpetual shame and infamy, yet would they purchase a second *Field of blood*, so little they value the name of an *Englishman*, which once was beyond parallel, and is now even among the *Turks* become a scorn, and must be dash'd in the Teeth with *Murdering their King*, though never so loyal in heart. Thus have these Vipers made our whole Nation odious to the World by their venomous Doctrine.

Thirdly, I may more then probably conjecture, that they have another aim, even such as was *Jeroboam*: when he had drawn away the Ten Tribes from the House of *David*, he said in his heart, *If the people go up to Jerusalem to worship, their hearts will return again unto their Lord Rehoboam*; and therefore he erected two Golden Calves, and said unto the people, *It is too far for you to go up to Jerusalem; these are the Gods that brought you up out of the Land of Egypt*: So these intending to draw away the King's Subjects from their Obedience, and perceiving that if they should joyn with His Majesties good Subjects, in the true and orderly worship of God, that their hearts would return again unto their Lord the King; they have devised an Idol of their own brain, like *Jeroboam's Calves*, even their *Presbyterial Discipline*, and cry that up as the only true worship of God.

And yet I hold them not all to be alike guilty, but that many, yea the far greatest part, have not as yet learned the depth of Satan: we may distinguish them into two degrees; The first sort are, they who are the principal Contrivers and Actors, and the Seducers of others; for such there is no excuse to be made, therefore I shall leave them as wild Asses, to be spoken with in the mouth of their affliction: The second sort, and the far greater number, are the Seduc'd, which are like those 200 which followed *Abalom* out of *Jerusalem*, knowing nothing of his Treason; these have been drawn to dance after their Pipe, though they understood not the Tune, yet they are carried along with it, and all done under Godly pretences: for they are made to believe, that the very state of Religion, Church, and Kingdom, do depend on the *Covenant*, and that they are all bound in Conscience to defend the *National Confession of Faith*, and the Oath to maintain it, sworn by their Forefathers: besides, it is with the people a very plausible matter, to hear them depraved that are in Authority, but especially to understand of any Liberty or Power, which may appertain unto themselves. Furthermore also, it is not unknown to any of Judgment, how much the profession of extraordinary Zeal, doth work with the un-thinking Multitude; when they see men go simply in the Streets, bowing down their heads like Bulrushes, though their inward parts burn with deceit, wringing their Necks awry, fetching deep sighs, and turning up the whites of their Eyes, as though they were in some intollerable grief; and finally, make long Prayers, under colour whereof they would not only devour the Houses of the Fatherless and Widows, but the Married people also, in so much that none can escape their violence. Lord, what Tyrannical hands are we like to fall into! can these men produce me one Text of Scripture, to support or verifie their proceedings? No not one; for those Holy Laws admit not of *Usury, Sacrilege, Disobedience to a lawful Authority*, and *Rebellion against Princes*: these are the very Incendiaries of Christendom, as if they had come to set Fire on the Earth; not gentle and mild, but are more austere in their carriage than ever was *Cato*; they are known to be the most rigid Censurers of others, whilst they applaud their own Vicious Actions in the highest; they easily espy the Mote in their Brothers eye, but cannot endure to hear of the Beam in their own.

All this have I done, to detect these men and their proceedings, to the end that I might draw from amongst them, all that pretend to Christianity, or any the least Moral Virtues, if there be any such uncorrupted: for who would follow their steps, whose Religion is *Sacrilege*, whose Bond is *Perjury*, whose Badge is *Rebellion*? Therefore come out from amongst them, and partake not in their sins, lest you receive also of the Plagues God has prepared for them, and think not to halt thus between *God and Baal*; neither do thou fear their power, for howsoever they prosper for a time, it is but a Summer Storm, and let them be assured it will not be long before their turn of Sufferings come about: For that God by whose Power *Kings Reign*, will give strength unto his King, and exalts the horn of his Anointed; he will scatter the people that delight in War, and make their hearts to melt, and their joynts to tremble. This I protest to God I speak out of the great grief of my heart, and the very anguish of my Soul; when I consider the dreadful after-claps that are like to ensue, it fears me, that our Sins are come to a full maturity, and that we are ripe for God's Sickle to reap us. I dare not say, with *St. Paul*, that I could wish my self *Anathema*, or separated from *Christ* for my Country-men; but I do say with all sincerity of heart, that I could be content my Life were given in a Sacrifice, so that could procure the Peace and Unity of our Nation, that so my King and his good Subjects may be preserved from the most damnable havock *John Presbyter* designs to make amongst us: Therefore I beseech all you of good will to joyn with me, by applying our endeavours for quenching of this Fire, (which as yet is only to be found by its Smoak) let all of us be instant with God in Prayer, lifting up our hearts and hands to the Heavens, and beseech him who is the Author of Peace, that he will be pleased to open the eyes of that wicked People, and turn their hearts, that they may acknowledge their Duty to God, and perform their Obedience to his Vice-gerent: This is the true Prayer of honest

Tom the Joyner.

